



# Toronto FC Media Conference

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## John Herdman

Media Conference

New York City 2, Toronto FC 1

**Q. Obviously this is a difficult place to play, and especially with a growing injury list. Can you give us your thoughts on the evening, and also, whether you were disappointed with that second goal, because your team had soaked up so much pressure and kind of backed away and let them come forward.**

**JOHN HERDMAN:** Yeah, I think a couple of things. Coming here tonight, I'm really, really happy with some of the players performances, how they stepped up. It was a difficult Friday with two players going out with injury the day before the game.

So it's been a next-man-up mentality. I thought made some great stops at the end tonight, Jahkeele getting his first goal for the club, I thought that was a big moment for him in his first start of the season.

Ultimately, you know, you expect the game to be a little bit scruffy because you're just losing that little bit of cohesion, but the effort was there. I mean, I think that's what I wanted to see. You're not going to win every game in the season. You're going to have tough moments and this is a hard place to come. When this team gets into rhythm, they are a tough team to play. I thought all in all, the effort was there. We were just starting to manage particularly in the second half their midfield numbers. We had a few square pegs in round holes, but we shifted tactically and sort of matched them in the midfield. Just concentration, they are able to get between the wingback and centerback, and right in a moment where we probably could have handled the better in their half of the field.

I think all in all we needed to handle the ball better tonight to get more control into the match. I think that we'll be disappointed but at the same time, difficult to get that cohesion with a lot of changes and missing quality like Raoul and Jonathan Osorio, those two players, glue elements of our tactical blueprint together but you know, they have to adapt, and for a long period I thought we did.

**Q. Three shots on target for you guys compared to nine for New York City FC. How do you account for such a large gap in shots on target?**

**JOHN HERDMAN:** Yeah, I mean, it's an area we've got to keep working on, there's no doubt about. I think we are in an away game, you can always look at the realities of when you're away from home. But if you look at the summary, they had 60 shots. We had 40. The possession was quite consistent, as well. All in all, it comes down to quality. I think for us, we've got to keep working on that part of the field.

Obviously as a coach, you'd like to see some of chances get buried but we'll keep working on it. That's part of our growth this year and away from home, it's one an area that we absolutely want to have to dominate. We want to be good in transition and clinical, which I think most away teams are. Defensively, just disappointed on that second goal. You can give them a world in set piece and you expect Luka to make some good saves as well. But at the same time, you know, for us, that



second goal was a little bit soft, just given that we just started to match their rhythm as well.

So all in all, we'll work with that space. We have got to work with our front five. We've got to d work on more chance creation but at the same time, to doubt, away from home, it's more about a clean sheet and finding your moment to transition and have a that moment of good buildup. I think we had some of those moments tonight.

**Q. Just wanted to go back to the goal from Jahkeele. Was that long ball option something you guys had seen might play out, and what does a goal like that, what does a first MLS goal do for a young player as he's looking to build into the season?**

**JOHN HERDMAN:** Well, it's a tight pitch, so we asked Jahkeele to -- on that inside channel and just use his pace against those two centre-backs and the fullback. So that's something that worked on playing him inside, to open Lorenzo at the same time. But we knew that there's not much width on this field and vertically, it's tight.

So all in all you have to stretch that back line as much as you could. So for him to get him behind and then take his goal so well, it was nice to see. I mean, it's a big moment for a young man that's been craving that moment.

Proud of him. He got his goal and hopefully he can kick on from this.

**Q. Can you run us through a couple of the injuries? Nicksoen Gomis I understand was injured in the Charlotte game but he finished out the game. Were Oso and Petretta late withdrawals?**

**JOHN HERDMAN:** Yeah, it's been a difficult week, that's for sure. So if you look at the squad at the moment, Nicks' was very unfortunate. He had the concussion in the LAFC game, and then he's fallen on his wrist, and unfortunately it's that awkward skiff (ph) point, which it's a really tricky bone in the wrist, so you have to get that one right. Normally you would just cast that up and put him out, but it's a really tricky bone. So the surgery was successful and we'll see him in about four weeks' time. Real shame, because as I say, his quality, I think we missed a little bit of that tonight with his left foot.

And then Raoul, we adjusted, had him at left wide center back where he played in the opening game against Cincy, he's done a good job there the last -- he's had a few challenges in the past with his hip, and just sort of flared up a bit and led into a tear in the adductor. So he's about two to three weeks away, four weeks away, at max.

Sean Johnson, he won't be too long now. He's on his way back. Yeah, I mean, it's been a tricky time. Young Matty, if he can progress his minutes through the next few weeks, he's just sort of returned back to match fitness. So we can't push him too far in these games.

So again, we adapt and manage and it's got to be next man up. So the players that come in, they have got an opportunity and they have got to take him.

**Q. And Oso?**

**JOHN HERDMAN:** Yeah, Jonathan it was the same, he twisted his ankle on the first game and got a little flare-up in the hip again. Just one thing tends to lead to another, and him and Raoul both had to pull out on the Friday and match day minus one, they sort of tested some things and didn't feel right.

So for Oso, really precautionary. He just wasn't good to go. Big loss for us in that sense.

But at the same time, you come to this stadium and you take a goal lead with the players that are out there, and I thought it was a real team spirit tonight. The effort was there. The togetherness was there. Just maybe the quality was missing, and we'll work on that.

**Q. I don't think I'm out of line in saying that Luka came up with some pretty big saves tonight, and if not, then it might not have been 1-1 going into the halftime break. Curious to get your perspective on his performance tonight, what you saw from him?**



**JOHN HERDMAN:** Yeah, again, two big saves, I thought, important saves. I think we know in this league that you'll get punished by quality strikers, if you give them that inch and yard. I think they start to find a little rhythm off some of our errors building out.

I think that was a big issue tonight. We were just a little bit sloppy. I never thought we were able to get ahold of the ball in the areas we needed to. Just that extra passing side, we needed to be more vertical, which meant that Luka was called into action probably more than he was needed to. I think in away games, you've just got to be smart, particularly on that pitch.

We were caught in two minds between drawing to play beyond the press, and at times we were just looking for that extra pass inside and across. So yeah, he was called on. He made some good saves. He made a good save against Charlotte and couldn't, I think two good saves that are important for keepers in this league to make.

**Q. We got our first look at Tyrese, what did you see from him in his little cameo?**

**JOHN HERDMAN:** Yeah, he's very direct. Again, he's building match minutes. He's building experience in the league. Being out for a good period of time with an injury. He's been building some minutes at TFC three and that's his first experience. He nearly had an assist on his second or third touch and it was a big moment from very direct, he shows that pace and he's got quality in that left foot.

I mean, it was definitely a good start from Tyrese. I think he can be pretty happy with his start today on the TFC line. It was there. He was right there.

**Q. I wanted to get your thoughts on that last 15 minutes, you threw everything but the kitchen sink at them. Why go all out in those last 15 minutes?**

**JOHN HERDMAN:** Well, we just had a shift -- shifted formation, so we shifted from the back three, taking Siggie out, and made sure that we were able to get two up against their back five and see if we could occupy the three center backs to open those pockets. Try to get Lorenzo on the ball so we could initiate things with his quality, and ultimately got the overload on the wingback with the inside forward whether it was Fede or Tyrese and Lorenzo on the other side. So you have to go all out that 15 minutes. We were chasing the game. They were down to ten men. It was a big opportunity there.

Again, I think for us, the mentality was there. The attitude was there. You've never seen the sort of hands going up, the frustration from the players. They stayed in the fight right to the end. At the end of the day we know it's tough to win on the road, and particularly in these type of terrains that they are masters of, and you know, we'll come away from that knowing we were right there, 1-0, 14 shots to their 16. Yes, they had quite a few on goal. We needed to accumulate more on goal.

But TFC were in the fight there. This wasn't a game where we're done at halftime or done just after halftime. We were right there.

**Q. It's early days yet, and we haven't seen all your forwards in this action. But do you have the No. 9 you need?**

**JOHN HERDMAN:** I think it's all under assessment. Preseason has been a great period of time to see and assess. This period now is an assessment period for these players.

You know, Prince has been getting these opportunities. Ayo had some opportunities in preseason. Deandre, he's just coming back from that injury, so he only had 20 minutes in tonight. That's it.

You know, I'm going through that assessment with a fine-tooth comb. I'm looking at all aspects. Are they able to hold the ball; are they able to link and bring people like Lorenzo in the game; are they clinical in the box, are they able to get the timing right behind, all the things we need from the profile in that No. 9, they are being assessed on.

Certainly the effort there. That's what I've got to say, from those nines, they are putting the shift in. There's no one shirking their responsibility. You know, we are going to keep putting them in their moments. They had moments tonight, there's no doubt. And we'll keep putting them in those moments in training to sharpen that -- sharpen that sword that they need to sharpen, which is to be clinical when that chance comes because strikers in this league, you don't got many chances, and



when they come, you've got to take them. So that's part of the assessment.

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